RECLAIMING UNUSED LAND INTO AN INCLUSIVE PUBLIC SPACE

Case study: Mexico City

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

- A parcel of land was identified as unused and a candidate to be transformed into a public park
- Owner: local government of Azcapotzalco in Mexico City
- Land dimensions: about 1,400 square meters
- Duration of the project: five months for its completion
- Launched: September 2014
- Implementation process: eight phases

Sustainable Development Goals + New Urban Agenda

Federal Law for Human Settlements

2016

(create public spaces and urban development plans or programs by reclaiming spaces and

ensure accessibility to persons with disabilities)

Public Space Rescue Program

Mexico City Law of Environment

Program of Decisions by Neighbourhood

CRITERA TO CREATE THE PUBLIC PARK

- Neighbours chose to intervene the land through the Mexico City Program
- Few open public spaces in the neighbourhood
- Social issues in the neighbourhood

PHASE 1 Define the problem

Stakeholders involved: local and city government, developer, community

ISSUES

Involve the private sector to invest in public spaces. ✓

Not enough inclusive urban policies for negotiations. ✗

Consider since the beginning creating an inclusive public space. ✓

- Mitigation measure made by a private developer.
- Socio-economic study of the neighbourhood.
- Need to create social life in the neighbourhood.
- Need to create activities for different age groups.
- Need to improve urban image.
- Negotiations between the local and city government with the developer.

PHASE 2 Site analysis

Stakeholders involved: developer, building construction company, and urban and landscape designers

ISSUES

Developer not sure who should intervene the sidewalk around the park.

Topographic land survey. Decision-making of which elements (manholes and utility poles) to keep according to the budget.

Need to work on urban image.

• Use of land: industrial use and low rise housing around the land.

• Activities around the land: small shops.

• Pedestrian and vehicle flows: access point to the public transport network, bus stops and taxi stands.

• Social life: perception of insecurity and risky behavior (skate boarders).

• Environmental factors: trash, smells, visual pollution.

PHASE 3 Community participation

Stakeholders involved: local government and community

ISSUES

Designers did not participate in the process. 

Community did not participate through focal groups. 

Lack of resources and methods for community participation. 

- Government organized meetings with the community to discuss the project.
- Not much participation nor engagement of the community.
- Community wanted a safer environment.

PHASE 4 Program and design proposal

Stakeholders involved: building construction company, urban and landscape designers and access consultant

ISSUES

Existing guidelines and standards for parks and for accessibility to persons with disabilities. ✓

Use of universal design concept (inclusive design). ✓

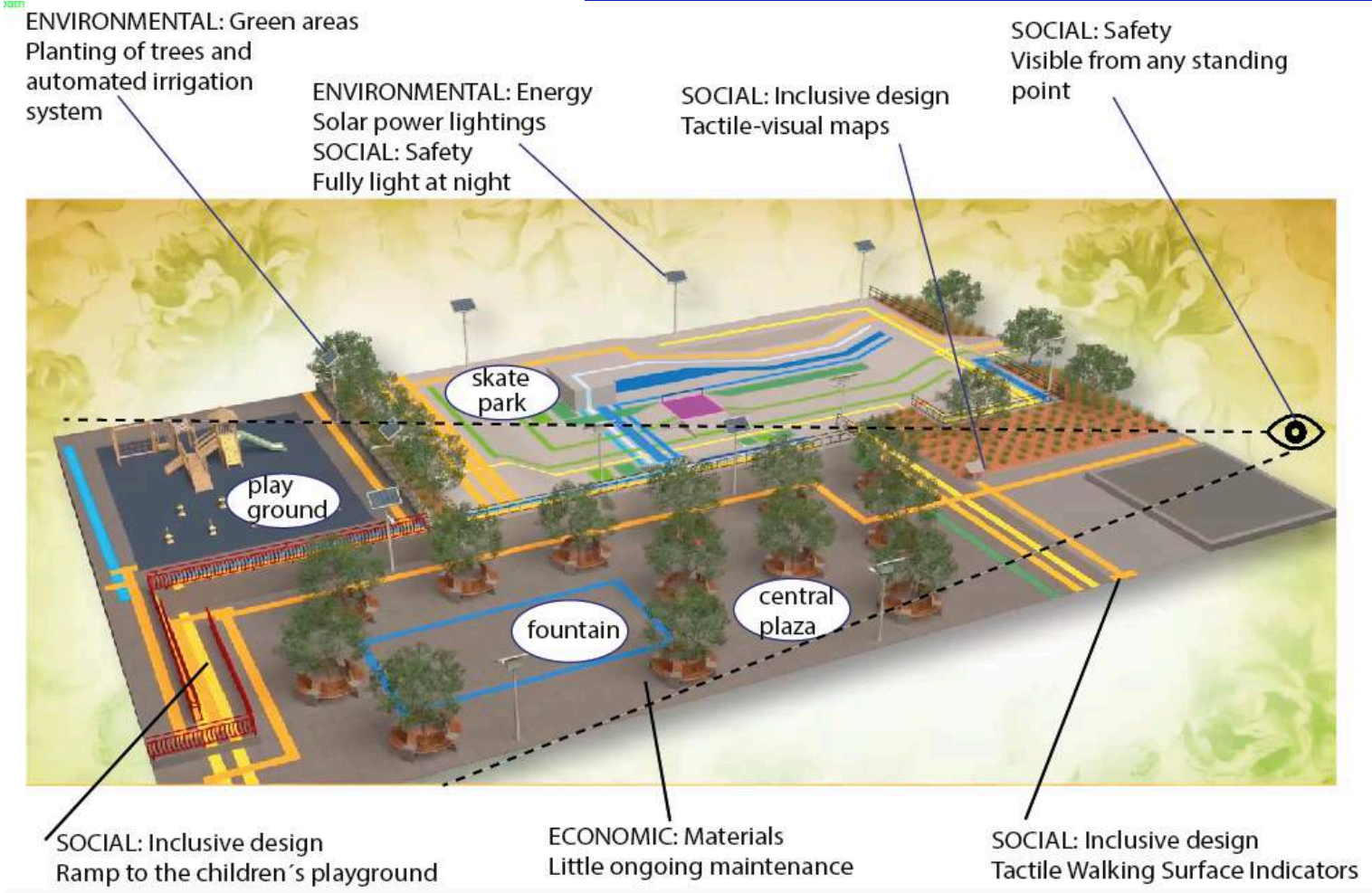
Access consultant involved. ✓

PHASE 4 Program and design proposal

Stakeholders involved: building construction company, urban and landscape designers and access consultant

ISSUES

Based on the three pillars of sustainability (environmental, social and economic).



SOCIAL: Areas for different ages

PHASE 4 Program and design proposal

Stakeholders involved: building construction company, urban and landscape designers and access consultant

ISSUES

Time constraints.

Incorporate more environmental friendly features.

Lack of information, availability or costs of building products in the market.

PHASE 5 Community validation

Stakeholders involved: local government, urban and landscape designers and community

ISSUES

Not enough feedback to ensure community needs.

Time constraints.

• Design proposal presented by the urban and landscape designers to the community with a low level of community participation.

PHASE 6 Government approval

Stakeholders involved: developer and local and city government

ISSUES

Not a standarize criteria of all government departments for approval.

• Different government departments approved the project.

• Not a common front from different government departments.

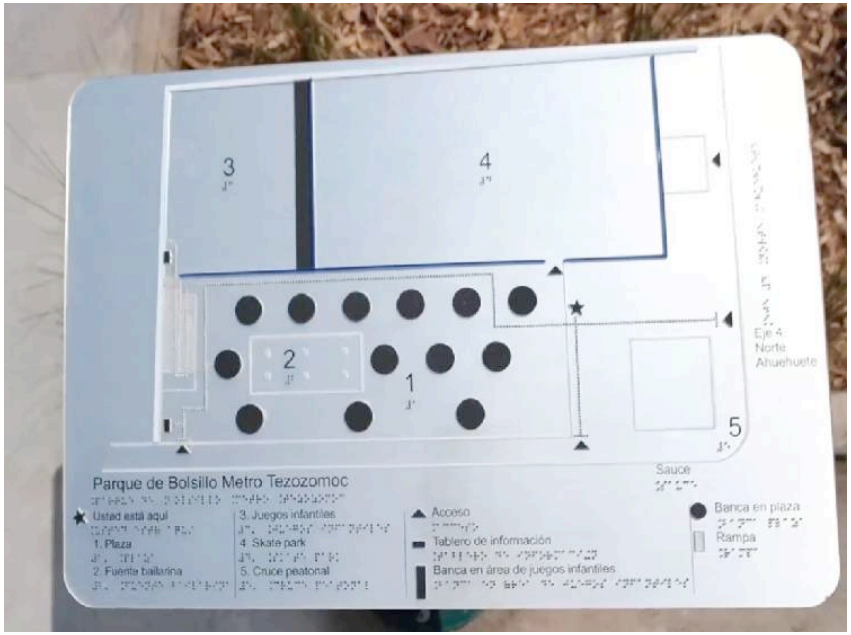
PHASE 7 Construction process

Stakeholders involved: building construction company, urban and landscape designers and access consultant

ISSUES

Lack of local products and materials (suppliers for tactile signage with colour).

Developer agreed to invest on accessible features to comply with government standards (tactile warning surface indicators).



PHASE 8 Ribbon cutting

Stakeholders involved: Major of Mexico City, local and city government and community

ISSUES

Political capital to the Major. ✓

Media release. ✓

Announce as first accessible park with tactile pavement and signage. ✓

City government web site: first inclusive park. (use as a reference for building future parks) ✓

THE PARK TODAY

ISSUES

Sidewalks and pedestrian crossings to the metro station Were not intervened. ✗

Meeting point for young skate boarders and others. ✓

Neighbours involve in the maintenance of the park. ✓

Not thought about a management plan for the park. ✗

Lack of scheduled activities. ✗

No monitoring and evaluation of the project. ✗

LESSONS LEARNED

• Identify and address gaps during the different phases of the implementation process.

• Need to address the accessibility chain – linking buildings, public spaces, pedestrian crossings, and public transport.

• Create clear design guidelines in the use of “universal design” principles, which benefits all.

• Promote community participation during the different phases of the implementation process.

• Promote scheduled activities for the constant use of the park, for example, an environmental education program.

• Make good use of government and/or private sector sources of funding.

• Identify the implementation gaps between policies and practice to achieve inclusive urban spaces.

• Harmonize urban development policies at different levels of government with policies for inclusion.

• Have regulations about increasing the percentage of accessible public green spaces by transforming unused land.

DONE
FOR AND BY
PERSONS